

Ray Loses New Trial Bid

James Earl Ray's latest bid for a new trial has been thrown out by Criminal Court Judge William H. Williams.

Ray's attorney, Mark Lane, had listed six grounds for a new trial. Four had been rejected earlier by state and federal courts, Williams said. He rejected a fifth ground — that jurors in Ray's trial did not specify the degree of homicide. Williams said jurors specified first-degree murder.

The judge said he considered the sixth ground, "withdrawn and abandoned" because Lane failed to file a written amendment to the new trial petition incorporating it. Lane had claimed on May 24 that new evidence would show that two public defenders were mentally incompetent when they represented Ray.

Williams added that the claim "is not only too general, vague and conclusory in substance, but is a ground that was re-

quired by law to have been raised years ago at first opportunity to raise such a ground seasonably."

Lane refused to name the two lawyers, but records showed Ray's two public defenders at the time of his March 10, 1969, guilty plea were Hugh Stanton Jr., now district attorney general, and his late father.

Ray received 99 years after pleading guilty to the April 4, 1968, assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He is in Brushy Mountain State Prison. During his imprisonment he has filed a steady stream of legal papers and had four hearings in various courts.

Williams dismissed his latest new trial petition without an evidentiary hearing. The judge granted an appeal to the state Court of Criminal Appeals.

Ray's Attorney Vows Continued Appeals

Charles Galbreath, one of the lawyers for James Earl Ray, said he will appeal a Criminal Court ruling denying a new trial to the confessed killer of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The request was denied Tuesday by Criminal Court Judge William H. Williams. Galbreath said he will appeal to the Criminal Court of Appeals, where he once served as a judge.

Ray pleaded guilty to first-degree murder in the slaying of King in 1968 and received a 99-year prison sentence.

Galbreath and Mark Lane, another attorney for Ray, said Ray's guilty plea before a jury should be voided because the jury allegedly did not specify Ray's admitted degree of homicide. Williams rejected the claim, saying first-degree murder had been specified.